

# HOW TO FERTILIZE LIKE A FLORIDIAN

*And follow Pinellas County law*

Summer rains wash fertilizer into our lakes and oceans, spoiling our water. That's why it's illegal in Pinellas County to fertilize your lawn during the rainy season, and why slow-release is required the rest of the year.

## JUNE THROUGH SEPTEMBER

- **Skip the fertilizer.** Pinellas County law bans the sale or use of lawn or landscape fertilizers containing nitrogen or phosphorous from June 1 to September 30.
- **Pump some iron.** Use Florida-friendly yard products that contain micronutrients to green up your lawn.
- **Get better dirt.** Add compost, composted cow or chicken manure, perlite or other soil amendments.
- **Pick better plants.** Florida-friendly landscaping needs less fertilizer, water and overall care. Visit [www.BeFloridian.org](http://www.BeFloridian.org) to learn more.

## OCTOBER THROUGH MAY

- **Twice is nice.** Fertilize just twice a year, in April and October.
- **Watch the weather.** Rainstorms don't water in fertilizer, they wash it away.
- **Skip the phosphorus.** The Tampa Bay region is naturally rich in phosphorous. Only use phosphorus-based fertilizer if a soil test turns up a deficiency.
- **Choose slow-release.** Pinellas County law requires lawn or landscape fertilizers with nitrogen to be at least 50% slow-release (also called timed-release, controlled release or slowly available) from October 1 to May 31.



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# — SEVEN WAYS —

## TO STEP IT UP AND KEEP OUR WATERS FUN

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### READY TO GO ALL OUT?

After all, our very way of life — boating, fishing, relaxing by the water while sipping drinks with little umbrellas — is at stake.

- 1 Test your turf.** If the problem is a pH imbalance, pest invasion, or disease, fertilizer won't help. Call the Pinellas County Extension Service for help at 727-582-2100.
- 2 Perfect 10.** Keep fertilizer at least 10 feet away from any body of water.
- 3 Sweep it up.** Whisk fertilizer granules off sidewalks, streets and driveways. Otherwise, it's algae food.
- 4 On your guard.** Use a spreader with a deflector shield or edge guard so you spread fertilizer only where you need it.
- 5 Keep the clippings.** Leave grass clippings right on your lawn. Clippings can supply up to 50% of the nitrogen your grass needs.
- 6 Mow high.** Mowing too short stresses the turf and makes it vulnerable to disease, pests, and drought. Typical St. Augustine grass should be mowed at 3.5 to 4 inches.
- 7 Be Floridian.** What works in New Jersey or Ohio is silly here in the semitropics. Learn how to design your yard for where you live now at [www.BeFloridian.org](http://www.BeFloridian.org).



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